

D/ICS-83-0684  
23 May 1983

STAT MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED]  
Director, Office of External Affairs

STAT VIA: [REDACTED]  
Director, Intelligence Community Staff

STAT FROM: [REDACTED]  
Chief, Community Counterintelligence Staff  
Intelligence Community Staff

SUBJECT: Unauthorized Disclosures of Classified Information  
Through Media Contacts

1. In examining the problems associated with unauthorized disclosures, one area deserving of some attention is contact with media representatives by officials having access to classified information. Admittedly, this is a complex problem and one not subject to simple solutions; yet, officials in positions of authority are frequently and regularly sought out by media representatives for interviews and discussions of subjects which inevitably draw on classified knowledge. In fact, it is because of access to classified (and thus not otherwise available) information that Government officials are sought out. Even if they talk in "unclassified" terms, they are discussing from a basis of classified information, and I challenge the ability of anyone, over time, to make clear and absolute delineation between classified and non-classified knowledge.

2. In my view, an ideal solution would be to stop all one-on-one media contacts with all responsible Government officials having regular access to classified (particularly intelligence) information. This is probably impractical as a total prohibition, but there certainly are severe limitations that could be effected to reduce substantially the contacts and discussions now occurring. Some ideas are:

- In designated departments and agencies within the National Security area, authorize media interviews only with one or two leadership officials designated and authorized by the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs or by the President.
- All such interviews will require prior arrangement, written notification of subject and scope, sufficient time in advance to permit knowledgeable staff support preparation, and will be

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witnessed throughout by at least two or three substantively knowledgeable officers. All other contacts--social, informal, hurriedly arranged--will be discouraged or preferably prohibited.

- All media contacts with any Government employees other than those designated as above will be prohibited and will be diverted or redirected to an identified and authorized department or agency public media spokesman.
- Each department or agency will have a public media spokesman identified and available to take substantive inquiries or meet with media representatives on request. If any request or discussion requires a substantive response, it will not be provided at the time. Instead, it will be incumbent on the spokesman to seek professional and substantive advice from one or more knowledgeable officer(s) or other authorities, and to provide responses at a later time. The response provided will have been agreed to by two or more persons and cleared, if necessary, with higher authority.
- To make these arrangements workable and to avoid placing the department or agency spokesmen in an uncertain or untenable position, the spokesmen will be given all necessary and appropriate security clearances, but will be the regular recipient of no substantive intelligence. The purpose in this is to enable the spokesman in any given instance to plead ignorance legitimately and to be allowed time to check and obtain needed information prior to responding. He will be cleared and authorized to receive specific information, but should have no routine access. He will thus be compelled to seek substantive advice, assistance, and agreed clearance for any response.

3. This admittedly is a hard-nosed approach, and I am sure these proposals will bring screams of anguish from all concerned--leaders, subordinate officials, spokesmen and, in particular, the media in all its various forms. It represents a new way of doing business and a wide departure from past (comfortable) practices. But, if security concerns are paramount, then some new procedures are demanded by the magnitude of the problem. National Security officials must be prepared to ward off bitter media attacks or be calloused to the expected reaction. It is likely that such procedures, having clear purpose and strictly enforced, will become accepted and workable after the initial firestorm of reaction. It is incumbent on all concerned from the President down to stand behind the procedures and to demand compliance from all concerned.

4. A final note: Nothing in the foregoing set of proposals is intended to be vindictive against media representatives, department agency officials and spokesmen, or Government leaders. The proposals are set forth as a reasonable, workable way to protect against inadvertent or unauthorized

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disclosure of classified information which must remain classified. They do not inhibit authorized release by proper authority, nor do they in any way inhibit the proper flow of eligible Government information to the media and the public.

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cc:  
Chairman, DCI Security Committee

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